

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-6 (canceled).

Claim 7. (currently amended): A method for connecting exchanges via a packet-oriented communication network, wherein switching of exchange-internal voice data takes place on the basis of ~~substrate~~ substructure elements, and data transmission via the packet-oriented communication network involves Internet Protocol data packets, and the connecting exchanges are connected to the packet-oriented communication network via a respective conversion device, the method comprising the steps of:

subdividing the Internet Protocol data packets into substructure elements;

providing that each of the substructure elements include both a cell header and a useful data area;

transmitting, via a transmitting one of the connecting exchanges, voice data to be transmitted as substructure elements to an associated transmitting conversion device;

inserting, via the transmitting conversion device, the substructure elements into the subdivided Internet Protocol data packets unchanged, wherein no compression or decompression of the voice data is performed;

transmitting the Internet Protocol data packets from the transmitting conversion device to a receiving conversion device;

extracting, via a receiving conversion device associated with a receiving one of the connecting exchanges, the substructure elements from the received Internet Protocol data packets, wherein no compression or decompression of the voice data is performed; and

forwarding, via the receiving conversion device, the extracted substructure elements to the receiving one of the connecting exchanges unchanged.

Claim 8. (canceled).

Claim 9. (previously presented): A method for connecting exchanges via a packet-oriented communication network as claimed in claim 7, the method further comprising the steps of:

storing, via a respective cell header of a substructure element, a channel identifier for denoting assignment of the substructure elements to a transmission destination; and

storing, via the respective cell header, an item of length information for indicating a number of useful data segments transmitted in the substructure element.

Claim 10. (previously presented): A method for connecting exchanges via a packet-oriented communication network as claimed in claim 7, wherein the substructure elements are structured on the basis of an Asynchronous Transfer Mode data format in accordance with an agreement known as second ATM adaptation layer AAL Type 2.

Claim 11. (previously presented): A method for connecting exchanges via a packet-oriented communication network as claimed in claim 7, wherein for data transmission, the substructure elements are arranged in a useful data area of a data packet such that a substructure element starts in a segment defined as first useful data segment of the data packet.

Claim 12. (previously presented): A method for connecting exchanges via a packet-oriented communication network as claimed in claim 7, the method further comprising the step of:

defining a pointer, in a segment defined as first useful data segment of an Internet Protocol data packet, which is used to denote a start address of a first substructure element situated in a useful data area of the Internet Protocol data packet.